

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims and add new claims as indicated below:

1-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein said natural tissue comprises a biological tissue or a matrix derived from a biological tissue.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein said natural tissue comprises pericardium tissue.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein said natural tissue comprises small intestine submucosa.

20-26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) A method of augmenting the nucleus of an intervertebral disc, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) implanting in the intervertebral disc an intervertebral disc device comprising a length of ~~braided~~ natural tissue sized for introduction into an intervertebral disc nucleus space and having a first end and a second end, wherein said length of natural tissue has a first, straightened configuration and a second, folded configuration having a multiplicity of pleated folds, ~~wherein said first, straitened configuration presents a first cross-sectional size and said second, folded configuration presents a second cross-sectional size, wherein said first cross-sectional size is smaller than said second cross-sectional size;~~ wherein said device additionally comprises a drawstring effective for folding said length of natural tissue to its second, folded configuration after implantation of the tissue in a disc nucleus space, said

drawstring being secured to the length of natural tissue at or near the first end thereof,
said drawstring passing through the tissue from one side thereof to another at a
multiplicity of sites at predetermined intervals along the length of the tissue, exiting the
tissue at or near the second end thereof and extending beyond said second end to
terminate in an end portion for pulling the drawstring; and

(b) ~~pulling the drawstring to fold the length of natural tissue to its~~
~~second, folded configuration having a multiplicity of folds~~ implanting at least a portion
of said length of natural tissue starting with its first end into the disc nucleus space;

(c) pulling the drawstring while the implanted tissue remains essentially
in place to cause the folding of the implanted tissue within the disc nucleus space;
and,

(d) repeating, if necessary, steps (b) and (c) until the full length of
implanted natural tissue has acquired its second, folded configuration within the disc
nucleus space.

28-44. (Cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27 wherein said drawstring
passes though the ~~braided implant of at a multiplicity of sites throughout the length of~~
~~the implant, with said multiplicity being~~ length of natural tissue at at least three sites.

46. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 45 27 wherein said
drawstring passes through the length of natural tissue at at least five sites.

47. (Currently Amended) the method of claim ~~46~~-27 wherein said drawstring
passes through the length of natural tissue at at least 10 sites.

48. (Cancelled)

49. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the natural tissue is of braided construction.

50. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein step (b) is carried out with the aid of a cannula.

51. (New) An intervertebral disc device for implantation in a disc nucleus space which comprises:

(a) a length of natural tissue sized for implantation in the disc nucleus space and having a first end and a second end; and,

(b) a drawstring secured to the length of natural tissue at or near the first end thereof, said drawstring passing through the tissue from one side thereof to another at a multiplicity of sites at predetermined intervals along the length of the tissue, exiting the tissue at or near the second end thereof and extending beyond said second end to terminate in an end portion adapted to being pulled.

52. (New) The device of claim 51 wherein said natural tissue comprises a biological tissue or a matrix derived from a biological tissue.

53. (New) The device of claim 51 wherein said natural tissue comprises pericardium tissue.

54. (New) The device of claim 51 wherein said natural tissue comprises small intestinal submucosa.

55. (New) The device of claim 51 wherein said natural tissue is of braided construction.

56. (New) The device of claim 51 wherein said drawstring passes through the length of natural tissue at at least three sites.

57. (New) The device of claim 51 wherein said drawstring passes through the length of natural tissue at at least five sites.

58. (New) The device of claim 52 wherein said drawstring passes through the length of natural tissue at at least ten sites.